COVID-19 Guidance to the Hotel Sector

Provincial Coronavirus Response
April 8, 2020
A. Introduction

This document provides interim guidance for preventing the transmission of COVID-19 to operators of hotels, motels, hostels, inns and other forms of travel accommodation.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19, please refer to the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19.

Orders, Notices and Guidance from B.C.’s Provincial Health Officer and the Public Health Agency of Canada

To limit the spread of COVID-19, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) has issued Orders that impact the hospitality industry. These Orders outline conditions and provide specific direction regarding the services provided at your facility, including (but not limited to) all on-site meeting rooms, restaurants, bars, lounges, cafes, coffee bars, retail liquor locations, spas, salons, pools and fitness centres.

PHO orders:

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) quarantine order:

Guidance:
- BCCDC’s resources on self-isolation and self-monitoring: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation
- PHAC’s guidelines on self-isolation when you may have been exposed and have no symptoms: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-how-to-isolate-at-home.html
B. General Information

How is COVID-19 spread?

- COVID-19 is spread through large liquid droplets when a person infected with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes. The virus in these droplets can enter through the eyes, nose or mouth of another person if they are in close contact with the person who coughed or sneezed.
- COVID-19 is not transmitted through particles in the air and is not something that can enter the body through the skin.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and the common cold. These symptoms include cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing.
- People infected with COVID-19 may experience little or no symptoms, with illness ranging from mild to severe.
- Some people are more vulnerable to developing severe illness or complications from COVID-19, including older people and those with chronic health conditions.

Who needs to self-isolate?

- People who are contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case, meaning they have been or could have been exposed to the virus, but do not have symptoms, are required to self-isolate.
- Self-isolation means staying home and avoiding situations where you could come in contact with others. You may have been exposed to the virus and are at risk for developing COVID-19 and passing it on to others.
- You may NOT self-isolate in a place where you will be in contact with vulnerable people, such as seniors and individuals with underlying health conditions.
- Isolated individuals may NOT use any common hotel areas or implements, including ice and vending machines.

For more information about self-isolation for COVID-19, please see: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation)

- As of March 25, 2020, all persons arriving in Canada from abroad quarantine and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days under the Quarantine Act.

General Precautions

- Stay at home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.
- Practice diligent hand hygiene at all times.
  - Wash your hands regularly with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content.
  - Antibacterial soap is NOT required for COVID-19.
- Practice cough etiquette. Cough into your elbow or cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you sneeze. Immediately dispose of all used tissues in an appropriate waste bin and wash your hands right away.
- Maintain a physical distance of two metres from others at all times: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/physical-distancing](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/physical-distancing)
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, cigarettes, vaping devices, joints or bongs.
- Post signs to encourage hand hygiene among all staff and guests: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/signage-posters](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/signage-posters)
- Encourage staff to avoid touching personal items of guests, such as luggage.
- Install physical barriers (e.g., plexiglass sneeze guards) in locations such as reception desks.

C. Environmental Cleaning

Regular cleaning of all common areas, guest rooms and work rooms is essential to protect the health and safety of guests and staff from COVID-19.

General Cleaning Measures

- Train staff on the routine cleaning and sanitizing procedures for high touch surfaces, as well as laundry/linen handling procedures.
- Ensure daily cleaning and disinfection of all common areas and surfaces.
- Ensure high touch surfaces are cleaned twice daily. This includes doorknobs and handles, telephones, elevator panels and buttons, light switches, tables, chairs and work surfaces in staff rooms, desktops, washrooms, point of sale devices and menus.
- Clean visibly dirty surfaces before disinfecting, unless stated otherwise on the product instructions. Cleaning refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime and impurities. Cleaning does not kill germs but helps remove them from the surface.
- Use a disinfectant that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and a virucidal claim. Follow the instructions on the product label.
• If commercial or household cleaning products are not readily available, you can prepare a bleach and water solution with 100 ml of unscented household bleach per 900 ml of water. When using the bleach and water solution, the surface must remain wet for at least one minute. For more information, please see: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19_MOH_BCCDC_EnvironmentalCleaning.pdf

• Floors and walls should be kept visibly clean and free of spills, dust and debris.

• Empty and clean garbage cans in public areas regularly.

• Items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected should be removed (e.g., magazines, toys).

Housekeeping

• Cleaners should practice diligent hand hygiene before entering and after leaving each guest room.

• Use disposable paper towels and wipes for cleaning to avoid the possibility of cross contamination.

• All guest rooms are to be fully cleaned and disinfected after use. Special attention should be given to frequently touched items such as toilets, sinks, faucets, doorknobs, light switches, telephones, remote controls, bar fridges and garbage cans.

• Do NOT vacuum the room. Vacuuming creates aerosols that may contain viruses that can cause illness. Carpets should be cleaned using a steam cleaner which reaches a minimum temperature of 71°C, unless the floor coverings are not heat tolerant.

• Ensure an adequate supply of clean towels, toilet paper and plain hand soap is available in the guest room.
  o If individual bars of soap are provided in guest bathrooms, all remnants must be thrown out when the guests vacate their rooms.

• Ensure all dirty linens and towels are bagged and taken directly to the laundry.

• Between guests, remove and clean ALL glassware and dishes from the hotel room. Take items directly to the kitchen area for dishwashing. Alternatively, provide disposable glassware, dishes and utensils in rooms.

Housekeeping for Guests in Self-Isolation

• Site operators must identify and record the locations of all self-isolating guests.

• Do NOT provide housekeeping service inside rooms where people are in self-isolation.

• Ensure staff do NOT enter self-isolation rooms until authorized.

• Use alternate means of assisting guests in isolation, such as leaving fresh linens, toiletries and cleaning supplies outside the door during the period of isolation.

• Once the individual(s) in self-isolation have left a room, complete a thorough cleaning of all hard surfaces with an approved disinfectant, launder all removable cloth items (sheets, towels) and steam clean items that cannot be laundered (plush chairs, drapes). Discard all personal soap and shampoo remnants.
Waste Management for Guests in Self-Isolation

- Wherever possible, waste from all self-isolation rooms should be handled by a designated person or small, designated team.
- Staff should wear disposable gloves to remove waste from guest rooms and common areas.
- Ensure staff remove gloves and perform hand hygiene immediately after handling and disposing of waste.
- A single, sturdy, leak-resistant garbage bag is sufficient for containing waste.
- If a garbage bag is punctured or contaminated, it should be placed into a second bag.
- All bags should be securely closed and immediately placed in the main disposal bin for the facility.

Laundry

- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry and discard after each use. Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- If reusable gloves are worn, gloves should be dedicated for handling dirty laundry and should not be used for other purposes. Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- Do NOT shake dirty laundry. This minimizes the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air.
- Place dirty laundry directly into a linen bag without sorting. Do not overfill bags.
- Clearly mark laundry bins as 'clean' or 'dirty'. Ensure dirty laundry only contacts dirty laundry bins, and clean laundry only contacts clean laundry bins.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to manufacturer's guidance. Consider using a liner that can be laundered.
- Clean and sanitize the front loading area of washing machines frequently.
- Wash and dry items in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest possible water settings. Dry all items thoroughly.

D. Food and Beverage Services

Hygienic and safe food and beverage services are maintained by following routine guidance in the *Food Safety Act* and the Food Premises Regulation.

If your establishment includes a restaurant and/or liquor services, you are required to follow the Orders of the Provincial Public Health Officer relevant to your establishment: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-food-beverage-sector.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-food-beverage-sector.pdf).

Up-to-date information for food businesses can be found on the BCCDC webpage here: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/employers-businesses/food-businesses](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/employers-businesses/food-businesses)
Food Handlers¹

- Food handlers must regularly wash hands, even if they have no disease symptoms. This includes (but is not limited to) before starting, before preparing or handling food, after handling waste, after using the toilet, after blowing their nose, sneezing and coughing, after eating, drinking or smoking, and after handling money or credit cards.
- Food handlers must avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

General Food Service Precautions¹

- Follow safe food practices, such as protecting foods from contamination, minimizing direct handling of food and preventing cross-contamination of foods.
- Discard any foods that may have been contaminated from coughs or sneezes.
- Clean and sanitize utensils and surfaces in the kitchen regularly using standard sanitizing solutions (e.g., QUATs or chlorine). Follow the instructions on the product label.
- Increase frequency of cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces and high-touch areas.
- Wash/sanitize used dishes using regular procedures (e.g., sanitizing dishwasher).
- Do not offer buffets and other self-service options.
- Do not provide common water coolers or lobby snacks for guests.
- Encourage guest and staff hand hygiene before all meals. Make plain soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer available to support this activity, where possible.
- Regularly clean and disinfect equipment used for handling payments.

Delivering and picking up food trays

- Gloves are not required when delivering or picking up food trays.
- Proper hand hygiene must be practiced before delivering and after picking up food trays.
- Do NOT bring food carts into guest rooms.
- Do NOT transport food on carts that have used dishes on them.
- Do NOT enter a room to deliver or pick up food trays for guests or staff members who are in self-isolation. Deliver and pick up food trays from outside their door.
- Regularly clean and disinfect carts used for transporting food and picking up dirty dishes.

Dishwashing

- Dishwashing temperatures must be monitored in a log, per your Food Safety Plan.
- Used dishware from isolated guests and staff must be washed immediately.
- Disposable dishes are not required to stop COVID-19. Regular food trays, dishes and utensils can be used for guests.
• Manually scrape off food from plates prior to beginning dishwashing. Minimize the use of sprayers to remove food and residue.
• Regularly clean and disinfect carts used for transporting food and picking up dirty dishes.
• Clean and sanitize all dish buckets (dirty and clean) after each shift.
• Maintain separation between clean and dirty dishes in the dish washing area.

E. Spas and Salons, Pools, Fitness Centres and Playgrounds

• Personal service establishments including health spas, massage parlours and salons were ordered closed by the Provincial Health Officer on March 21, 2020.
• Close all on-site pools, whirlpools, wading pools, hot tubs, water spray parks, saunas, fitness centres, playgrounds and play areas.

F. Communication, Signage and Posters

Provide information to guests and staff on the following topics relating to COVID-19:
• B.C.’s COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool can help determine the need for further assessment: https://bc.thrive.health/
• Non-medical information about COVID-19 is available 7:30am-8:00pm, 7 days a week at the following toll-free number: 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319).
• Contact HealthLinkBC and 8-1-1 for health advice on COVID-19 (translation services are available).

Signage and posters can be useful as a guide for guests and staff regarding infection prevention and control measures in your facility.
• Information and posters for handwashing is located on the BCCDC website here: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/hand-washing
• Information and posters for respiratory/cough etiquette is located on the BCCDC website here: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/hand-washing
• Place signage on front doors telling guests and staff NOT to enter the premises if they are feeling ill. Direct these individuals the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool: https://bc.thrive.health/
• Information and posters for self-isolation and self-monitoring: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation

G. Staff Health

The following information can support your staff regarding COVID-19:
• Advise staff to report respiratory illness to their employer and do not return to work for at least 10 days following the onset of cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing and/or
shortness of breath. Advise them to use the COVID-19 self-assessment tool at BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool to help determine if further assessment or testing for COVID-19 is needed; contact 8-1-1 if further health advice is required; and 9-1-1 if it is an emergency.

- Ensure your employee illness policy is up-to-date and communicated to all staff immediately.
- If an employee reports they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 and have been at the workplace, clean and disinfect all areas where that person has worked.
- If staff live in facility-provided housing, develop a plan with designated isolation areas for ill individuals.
- If staff need to be isolated, they should be provided a separate room and bathroom wherever possible and they should follow all self-isolation guidance: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation.
- All staff must practice physical distancing to reduce the risk of getting sick. Avoid close contact (within 2 meters) when possible with other staff and guests. This includes employee breaks.

References

